

# Inside IEMA

Monthly Newsletter

Illinois Emergency Management Agency

September 2018

## Message From Acting Director William P. Robertson

The month of September is, historically speaking, the most active month for hurricanes. While we, in Illinois, do not experience traditional hurricane conditions, our first responders train year-round for all hazards, including those you find in a post-hurricane environment.

Our state's first responders and emergency workers are devoted public servants. They are dedicated to serving our communities. We have had our share of storms, tornadoes and flooding over the years, but I greatly appreciate and respect the work of those who answered the call to help those in need in North Carolina. Your countless hours of training are paying dividends and your expertise has been a valuable resource for the Tar Heel state.

As Hurricane Florence came ashore, the images from this deadly storm served as a sobering reminder why we, as Americans, should always be prepared for a disaster. Make sure you have an emergency kit with food, clothing and the necessary medicines for everyone in your family; learn life-saving skills such as CPR; check your insurance policy and coverage for floods, earthquakes and tornadoes; and create a family communication plan. Don't wait for a disaster to be at our door-step. Just as the theme to National Preparedness Month suggests, Disasters Happen. Prepare Now. Learn How.

You can learn more about emergency preparedness by visiting [www.ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.ready.Illinois.gov).



## In this issue

Illinois Assists States Impacted by Hurricane Florence.....	2
Ricker Delivers Update on NGA Grant Project .....	2
Wabash County Recognized as StormReady Community .....	3
National Cyber Security Awareness Month.....	3
What You Need to Know: Presidential Alert.....	4
Inside IEMA Info Corner .....	5
Great Central U.S. Shakeout – October 18 .....	6
Grant Deadlines .....	6
October 2018 Training Schedule.....	7
2018 IEMA Training Summit Highlights.....	8

# Illinois Assists States Impacted by Hurricane Florence

Illinois first responders answered the call for help in September 2018, to aid in recovery efforts in North Carolina following the aftermath of Hurricane Florence. Governor Bruce Rauner authorized two deployments of state assets to the Tar Heel state through an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

On September 12th, ten Illinois Army National Guard soldiers and two helicopters deployed on a ten-day mission. The crews hailed from Peoria's 138th Aviation Battalion and Kankakee's 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment. The soldiers provided valuable transport support for supplies and personnel throughout the area.

On September 14th, a 13-member Swiftwater search and rescue team deployed to North Carolina to assist with water rescues due to the catastrophic inland and coastal flooding caused by Hurricane Florence. The Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) task force is mostly from northern Illinois and is comprised of

firefighters from various departments throughout the state. The team provided more than a dozen water rescues in the Reigelwood area, just northwest of Wilmington, NC. The team's mission was extended, at the request of the state of North Carolina, to provide additional assistance as the state's rivers begin to crest.

"Illinois takes EMAC requests very seriously, and we always look to help when called upon," said Acting IEMA Director William Robertson. "You never know when you may be on the receiving end of these request. EMAC allows states to help other states be safe, secure and resilient against all hazards. That's the beauty of the partnership and collaboration behind EMAC."

Illinois and its public safety agencies stand ready to provide assistance in response to further EMAC requests as the east coast continues to respond to the aftermath of Hurricane Florence.



**(L) Illinois Army National Guard delivers supplies for a Wilmington, NC hospital. (R) MABAS IL-Task Force 1 Swiftwater Team performs water rescues in flooded areas northwest of Wilmington, NC.**



## Ricker Delivers Update on NGA Grant Project

The State of Illinois was awarded a National Governors Association Public Health and Preparedness technical grant in March of this year. A two-day workshop was held in May where objectives were identified aimed at enhancing public health preparedness and response capabilities. Specific actions in support of those objectives were developed and working groups have been meeting all summer to advance the project.

On September 18, the state's team lead, Acting Deputy Director Jennifer Ricker, joined team leads from the other five states at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) headquarters in Atlanta to report on

progress. Illinois' goals and objectives relate to the following areas:

- Plan deconfliction
- Scope of practice
- Policies and procedures
- Crisis communications
- Legislative caucus

While at the CDC, team leads also met with staff from multiple CDC programs and received a tour of the CDC's emergency operations center.



## Wabash County Recognized as StormReady Community

Countless hours of hard work and dedication have paid off for the Wabash County Emergency Management Agency and its volunteers. On Monday, September 17th, the National Weather Service (NWS) recognized Wabash County as a StormReady community.

The NWS StormReady is a voluntary program that helps communities with the communications and safety skills needed to save lives and property – before, during and after a weather-related event. The program encourages communities to improve their hazardous weather operations by:

- Establishing a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center;
- Have more than one way to receive severe weather warning and forecast and to alert the public;
- Create a system that monitors weather conditions locally;
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars; and
- Develop a form hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.



**Congrats to Wabash County EMA! Wabash County is the latest StormReady community in Illinois.**

There are more than 30 counties in Illinois that are certified as StormReady communities, with even more distinctions made at the local, commercial and university level. To learn more about how your community can become StormReady, visit [www.weather.gov/stormready](http://www.weather.gov/stormready).

## National Cyber Security Awareness Month

Most people spend several hours each day online for work, pleasure or both. The widespread usage of computers, laptops, smartphones and tablets offers countless opportunities to connect with information and people around the world. It also provides myriad opportunities for cyber criminals. During October, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) is joining with county and municipal emergency management agencies to increase awareness of online risks and provide tips on what people can do to prevent problems.

The Ready Illinois website at [www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov) provides links to information and tips to help people minimize the risk of being a cybercrime victim. Some of those tips include the following:

- **Configure your computer securely**  
Use privacy and security settings in your software, email system and web browsers. Regularly update

your anti-virus software to identify and thwart new strains of malicious software.

- **Keep software and operating systems updated**  
Install all software updates as soon as they are offered; using the “auto update” setting is the best way to ensure timely updates.
- **Use strong passwords**  
Cybercriminals use automated programs that will try every word in the dictionary in a few minutes. When creating a password, use at least 10 characters, with a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and symbols.
- **Be cautious about links and attachments**  
Even communications you receive that appear to be from friends and family may contain links to malicious sites, so be careful when clicking on links in those messages. When in doubt, delete it.

# What You Need to Know: Presidential Alert

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), along with its state partners at the Illinois State Police (ISP) and Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) are notifying residents on an upcoming test of the emergency broadcast alert system. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) plan to conduct a first-of-its-kind test of the nation's emergency communications infrastructure via a test called a "Presidential Alert."

On **Wednesday, October 3** a nationwide test of the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system will commence at **1:18 p.m.**, followed by a national test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) at **1:20 p.m.**

The WEA test message will read:

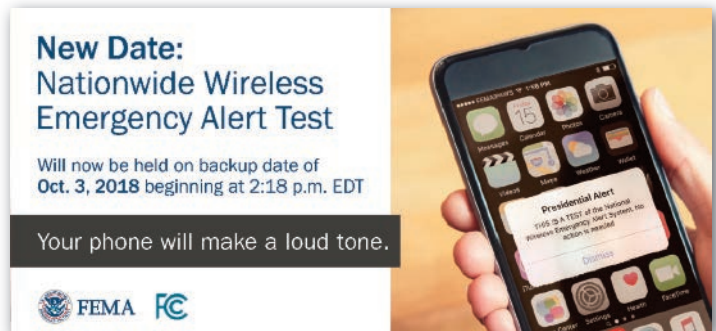
***THIS IS A TEST of the National Wireless Emergency Alert System. No action is needed.***

The EAS message will include a reference to the WEA test:

***THIS IS A TEST of the National Emergency Alert System. This system was developed by broadcast and cable operators in voluntary cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Federal Communications Commission, and local authorities to keep you informed in the event of an emergency. If this had been an actual emergency alert, an official message would have followed the alert tone you heard at the start of this message. A similar wireless emergency alert text message has been sent to all cell phones nationwide. Some cell phones will receive the message; others will not. No action is required.***

This is the first time the Wireless Emergency Alert system has been tested on a national level. WEA is used to warn the public about dangerous weather, missing children, and other regionally critical situations through alerts on cellular phones. WEA allows most customers to receive geo-targeted alerts of imminent threats to safety in their area. The October 3rd WEA test will be sent through the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). Cell towers will broadcast the WEA test for approximately 30 minutes. During this time, cell phones that are switched on and within range of an active cell tower should be capable of receiving the message. Cell phones should only receive the message once. Some older phones may not receive the test message.

"The test is intended to ensure public safety officials



have the methods and systems to deliver urgent warnings and alerts to the public in times of an emergency or disaster," said Acting IEMA Director William Robertson. "Periodic testing is a way to access the operational readiness of the infrastructure and determine whether technological improvements are needed."

While each message will clearly state THIS IS A TEST, and will make note that no action is needed, Illinois State Police will work with local law enforcement and 9-1-1 call centers prepare for the possibility of an increased call load. Additionally, the Illinois State Board of Education is working with schools to ensure parents and school children are aware that the test will occur during school hours.

"The continuity of communications during an emergency is a vital component of public safety," said ISP Director Leo P. Schmitz. "Testing our resources regularly ensures the abilities of first responders to save lives. The upcoming national test will help identify and repair deficiencies in keeping the public informed."

In 2006, President George W. Bush signed an executive order to create an effective, reliable, integrated, flexible and comprehensive system to alert the American people in situations of war, terrorism, natural disaster or other hazards of public safety and well-being. This task fell to the responsibility of the Department of Homeland Security, and resulted in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's creation of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). The law requires a nationwide EAS test at least once every three years. The last test of the EAS system was in 2017.

For more information about the upcoming test of the emergency alert system, including a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ), visit [ready.illinois.gov](http://ready.illinois.gov).

### Ionization Smoke Alarms

October is National Fire Prevention Month. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), approximately two-thirds of U.S. household fire deaths result from fires in homes with either no smoke alarms or smoke alarms with old or missing batteries. Simply stated, smoke alarms are critical to saving lives and minimizing property loss.

There are three types of smoke alarms: ionization, photoelectric, and combination devices that include both technologies. Ionization smoke alarms are generally more responsive to flaming fires, whereas photoelectric smoke alarms are generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For best protection, the NFPA recommends use of both ionization and photoelectric smoke alarms.

Ionization smoke alarms contain two metal plates, an ionization chamber, a power source, and a small amount of radioactive material.

The metal plates are connected to the power source. The metal plates function as electrodes to create a circuit pathway. The ionization chamber is an air-filled space between the two electrodes. The small amount of radioactive material, commonly americium-241, is encased in ceramic and foil. When americium-241 decays, it yields neptunium-237 and emits both an alpha particle and a weak gamma ray. The alpha particles pass through the ionization chamber and ionize the air molecules, allowing positive and negative

ions to flow between the electrodes creating a small, constant electric current, which completes the circuit or path of electricity.

When smoke or soot enters the ionization chamber, it disrupts the flow of ions, thus reducing the flow of current and activating the alarm.

#### **Can the radiation emitted from an ionization smoke alarm harm my family?**

The use of americium-241 in ionization smoke alarms is considered a beneficial use of radioactive material by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, because ionization smoke alarms are proven to save lives and they pose no radiation health risks if they are not tampered with and if they are used only as directed.

#### **How do I dispose of an ionization smoke alarm?**

There are no special instructions for disposal of ionization smoke alarms; however, the manufacturer may accept old alarms as part of a recycling program.



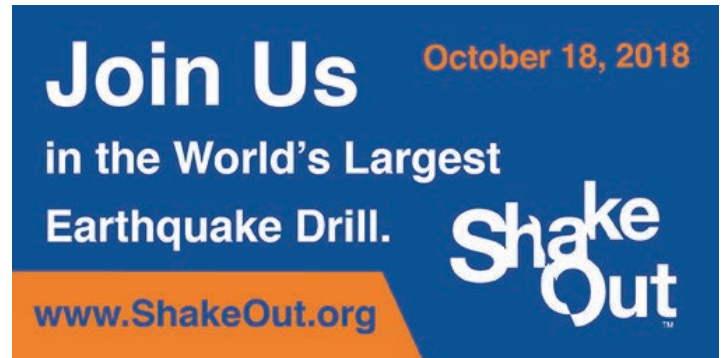


# Great Central U.S. Shakeout – October 18

It's not too late for you to register your office, school or family to participate in the upcoming Great Central U.S. Shakeout earthquake drill. Millions of people around the world will practice this life-saving technique at 10:18am on October 18th.

While most people are familiar with earthquake hazards on the West Coast, many are surprised to learn that one of the most powerful earthquakes to ever occur in the continental United States was centered in the Midwest. In fact, southern Illinois lies between two active seismic zones: the New Madrid and the Wabash Valley. A 5.2 magnitude earthquake along the Wabash Valley seismic zone occurred in April 2008 and could be felt in Chicago, Memphis and everywhere in between.

Learning how to “Drop, Cover and Hold On” during a Shakeout drill can help people prevent injury during an earthquake. The phrase reminds people to drop down to the floor, take cover under a sturdy desk, table or other furniture, and hold on to that object and be prepared to move with it until the shaking ends.



An earthquake can strike at any time whether you are at home, at school, at work or on vacation. While there is no way to prevent an earthquake from occurring, there are steps we can take to limit its devastating impact. For that reason, IEMA will continue to help communities and individuals prepare through planning, training, exercise and public awareness campaigns.

Register your participation in the Great Central U.S. Shakeout on October 18th by visiting [www.shakeout.org](http://www.shakeout.org).



## Grant Deadlines

### **Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program (FMA)**

Opening Date for Applications: October 1, 2018  
Applications Due: December 18, 2018

### **Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM)**

Opening Date for Applications: October 1, 2018  
Applications Due: December 18, 2018

For additional information, contact Sam Al-Basha, the State Hazard Mitigation Officer, at [sam.m.al-basha@illinois.gov](mailto:sam.m.al-basha@illinois.gov)

# October 2018 Training Schedule

## AWR 356 Community Planning for Disaster Recovery

**Location:** Hanover Park

**Date:** **October 15-16**

**Course Description:** Learn key concepts for disaster recovery planning, including the benefits of pre-disaster planning, whole community approach to planning, key elements of plans, and the plan development process. Increase your knowledge to initiate disaster recovery plans and participate in the long-term recovery planning process in your own community. Enhance your ability to support your community's overall disaster readiness through pre-disaster planning for post-disaster recovery.

**Registration:**

<https://public.iema.state.il.us/iema/Training/OnlineReg/classes.asp>

## G 205 Recovery from Disaster

**Location:** Joliet

**Date:** **October 17-19**

**Course Description:** This course covers foundational concepts in disaster recovery and the latest guidance on recovery planning. Participants will either assess their own recovery plan or a sample against this national planning guidance. Following that, participants will discuss how a disaster recovery effort can be organized, managed, and led along with the types of challenges faced by recovery managers. Scenario activities throughout the course give participants the opportunity to target information strategies, and address local capabilities and challenges. They will also analyze lessons learned from Joplin, Missouri. Understand local community responsibilities and challenges associated with disaster recovery. Discuss lessons learned in disaster recovery at the local level. Develop and implement a pre-disaster recovery plan.

**Registration:**

<https://public.iema.state.il.us/iema/Training/OnlineReg/classes.asp>

## Homeland Security Evaluation and Exercise Planning (HSEEP)

**Location:** Germantown Hills

**Date:** **October 18-19**

**Course Description:** This two day course provides a basic overview of the HSEEP exercise process. The goal of the course is to provide professionals with a set of guiding principles for exercise programs, as well as a common approach to exercise program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. Through the use of HSEEP guidance and processes, exercise program managers can develop, execute, and evaluate exercises that address the priorities established by their organization's leaders.

**Registration:**

<https://public.iema.state.il.us/iema/Training/OnlineReg/classes.asp>

## G 288 Volunteer and Donations Management

**Location:** Chicago

**Date:** **October 30-31**

**Course Description:** The purpose of this course is to introduce the skills and planning considerations that are required to manage large numbers of people who are not affiliated with an experienced relief organization, but who want to help in disasters. These "spontaneous volunteers" are generally well motivated and sincerely want to help, but if their efforts and resources are not coordinated effectively, their presence may be counterproductive and an added strain on the disaster area.

**Registration:**

<https://public.iema.state.il.us/iema/Training/OnlineReg/classes.asp>

# 2018 IEMA Training Summit Highlights



(Above) Deputy Director Jennifer Ricker welcomes nearly one thousand attendees to the 2018 IEMA Training Summit.



(Above, Left) Caleb Cage, chief of Nevada Emergency Management and Homeland Security Advisor, discusses the lessons learned following the shooting at a Las Vegas concert in October 2017, the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history.



(Above left) Deputy Director Jennifer Ricker thanks Major General Richard Hayes for his contribution to the 2018 IEMA Training Summit. The Adjutant General delivered an informative lecture on Cyber Security and Critical Infrastructure on the opening day of the Training Summit.



(Above right) The 2018 IEMA Training Summit drew nearly one thousand first responders of multiple disciplines from throughout Illinois to network and learn how to prepare for disasters, emergencies and topical issues in our world today. Many of the breakout sessions offered at the IEMA Training Summit required additional seating to accommodate last minute registrations.



# 2018 IEMA Training Summit Highlights



(Left) Dawn Cook, president of the Illinois Emergency Services Management Association (IESMA), and (Left below) IEMA's Doug Downey address the crowd assembled to witness friends and loved ones receive their Illinois Professional Emergency Manager (IPEM) and Professional Development Series accreditation.

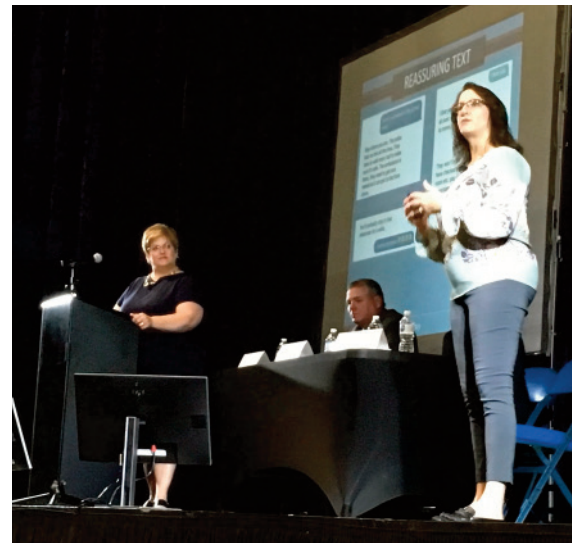


(Above) Dawn Cook (IESMA), IEMA Deputy Director Jennifer Ricker and IEMA Operations Manager Darryl Dragoo pose for class photos prior to the IPEM/PDS ceremony at the 2018 IEMA Training Summit.



(Left) Governor Bruce Rauner attended the 2018 IEMA Training Summit to thank first responders and emergency workers for their hard work, dedication and sacrifice. Governor Rauner also issued a gubernatorial proclamation declaring September 2018 as Preparedness Month in Illinois.

(Right) Margo Empen, Dixon U.S.D. #170 Superintendent, Mark Dallas, Dixon H.S. School Resource Officer and Kathy Spellman, IEMA Region 2 Coordinator, share lessons learned during the May 2018 shooting at Dixon High School. Here three perspectives are represented: educator, school resource officer and parent.





# 2018 IEMA Training Summit Highlights



(Below) A big thank you, again, to all of the vendors and sponsors participating in the 2018 IEMA Training Summit. Series accreditation.



(Right) Media from throughout the Midwest came to Springfield to cover the 2018 IEMA Training Summit and its exceptional lineup of featured speakers and topics.

# 2018 IEMA Training Summit Highlights



(Left) Michael Hingson recounts how he and his guide dog, Roselle, escaped the 78th floor of the World Trade Center on 9/11. His message to those in attendance: We never know what we are capable of until we're put to the test. Never give up.



(Above) Various members of the Illinois General Assembly attended a VIP Legislative Summit on September 4. The day included a briefing at IEMA headquarters in Springfield and a visit to the IEMA Training Summit to interact with local emergency managers from throughout the state.

Previous issues of Inside IEMA are available at:  
<http://www.illinois.gov/iema/Info/Pages/Newsletters.aspx>.



State of Illinois  
Illinois Emergency Management Agency

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